



TECHNICAL BULLETIN
Planning & Development Services
Building Inspections Division
TOPIC: Bonus Rooms, Unfinished Rooms, Accessible Attics,
Attic Storage, Etc.

This Technical Bulletin is intended to provide contractors, developers and property owners with information related to bonus rooms, unfinished rooms, accessible attics, attic used for storage, etc. and establishes the permit submittal, inspection and code requirements of each.

A room or area will be classified as “habitable” or “non-habitable” to distinguish the differences. All rooms must be labeled with a definitive proposed use, labels such as “Bonus Room”, “Flex Space” and “Optional” are not acceptable.

Any space or floor area that is provided with heating and/or cooling ducts is considered as “habitable” floor area of the structure. That space or floor area must be included in the total floor area of the permit application and must comply with the following code requirements:

- The space or floor area must be included as part of the conditioned floor area on the energy compliance approach (thermal envelope).
- The envelope of the space or floor area must be insulated and sealed to prevent air infiltration as required for all other conditioned spaces.
- The walls of the envelope or floor area must be provided with electrical outlets as required for habitable rooms.
- Non-metallic sheathed cable wiring must be placed in conduit or protected by sheetrock.
- Smoke / Carbon Monoxide detectors are required as per code for the space or floor area.
- If plans show provisions for future plumbing fixtures, then the minimum drain waste vent and water piping must be roughed and capped.
- Any windows installed in the space or floor area must satisfy the egress and energy code requirements for the approach utilized.
- The area may remain unfinished with respect to floor coverings, texture and paint.

Any attic space that is not provided with heating and/or cooling ducts and is accessible with a **fixed** stairway is considered “non-habitable” but must meet the following minimum requirements:

- The floor/ceiling joists of the attic space that is decked for storage shall be sized as floor joists as prescribed in Table R502.3.1(1) of the International Residential Code (IRC).
- The attic space shall be provided with a smoke detector and CO detector meeting all other code requirements.

Any attic space that is considered a “habitable attic” as defined by the IRC must include the items listed above for “non-habitable attics” with fixed stairways plus include:

- An emergency egress and rescue window as prescribed in Section R310 of the IRC.

If you have specific questions, please contact at (817) 459-6502.